

## ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL HOSTS PANEL FOR HOLLYWOOD PRODUCERS, WRITERS AND DIRECTORS By Kathleen Piché, Public Affairs Director



The Entertainment Industries Council (EIC) and the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) included the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) in a morning of discussion about mental health issues for the entertainment industry at Universal Studios back lot on Thursday, August 16, 2012.

Robin Kay, LACDMH Chief Deputy Director, welcomed the crowd of writers, producers and directors interested in mental health issues by informing them of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) programs and progress in Los Angeles County. Dr. Kay emphasized the power of film and television story lines that include responsible portrayals of persons diagnosed with mental illnesses.

Next on the program was Carly Steel, Television Hostess, who acted as moderator for a panel of persons with lived experience. Carly introduced Dr. Charles Sophy, Medical Director, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as the clinician on the panel. Dr. Sophy provided guidelines for responsible storytelling, noting that depicting signs leading up to crisis are just as effective and interesting as depicting someone in crisis.

Other panel members included Stephanie Welch, M.S.W., Program Manager for CalMHSA, Lisa Becker, and Lisa and Griffen Moskowitz. Stephanie spoke about how the stigma associated with mental illness prevented her from getting help as a teen for trauma and an eating disorder, and advised that mental illness effects not only the person experiencing the disorder, but everyone around them. Lisa revealed her own painful story of Bipolar disorder, highlighting that even “the guy speaking to a light pole on the street” can be helped. Mother-daughter team, Lisa and Griffen, discussed the family dynamics around Griffen’s eating disorder and how all family members are affected. The panel talked about their personal experiences and how they ultimately succeeded on the road to hope, wellness and recovery.

The EIC brings together the entertainment creative community, news media and mental health stakeholders throughout California to reduce negative public attitudes about people experiencing mental health challenges—and encouraging individuals to seek assistance and treatment before problems become crises.